

The Politics of Behavioural Change for Environmental Health Promotion in Developing Countries

Brendon R. Barnes

Medical Research Council of South Africa, brendon.barnes@mrc.ac.za

Behavioural change remains a popular intervention strategy for environmental health promotion in developing countries. This article explores the question of why behavioural change interventions continue to be widely used as an intervention strategy in developing countries and highlights the political implications of this approach. It suggests that framing interventions within a mainstream environmental health science paradigm serves to perpetuate a behavioural intervention approach while foreclosing other options. It also serves to perpetuate sexist representations of poor African women; absolves decision makers from addressing broader socio-political concerns (such as poverty and inequality) that are key to addressing environmental health concerns in developing countries; and sets up an expert model for environmental health and behavioural health scientists to thrive.

Key Words: behavioural change • environmental health • interventions • politics

Journal of Health Psychology, Vol. 12, No. 3, 531-538 (2007)
DOI: 10.1177/1359105307076239